Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board
Final Grant Report – January 31, 2023

Organization: Wright State University Libraries’ Special Collections and Archives

Project: Digitization of Dr. Arthur E. Thomas’ Program “Like It Is” Interviewing Leaders on Black America

Project Director: Jane Wildermuth, Head, Special Collections and Archives (937-775-3927, jane.wildermuth@wright.edu)

Summary of Project Activities and Accomplishments
The grant project funded a vendor to digitize a selection of 71 U-matic videotapes of the Dayton-based public affairs interview program titled “Like It Is,” from the Dr. Arthur E. Thomas, President Emeritus, Central State University, Collection, featuring leaders known for civil rights activism and overcoming race and gender barriers in politics, government, education, and the arts. The program was produced from 1978-1985 by Dr. Arthur E. Thomas, civil rights activist, former Director of the Bolinga Black Cultural Resource Center at Wright State, and President Emeritus of Central State University.

The project also funded 4 TB of university server space for long-term management and preservation of the digital files (preservation master uncompressed *.AVI files and compressed *.mp4 files for reference). The video files were ingested to the designated E-Archives server space and quality checked against the metadata files from the vendor. Of the 71 tapes, the vendor returned digital files for 69 tapes, and documented that two of the U-matic tapes do not contain content, one videotape does not contain the “Like It Is” program, and three videos had severe tracking and video dropout due to poor editing.

To facilitate public awareness and discoverability of the video files, the digitized tapes and associated digital files were processed and described at the item level in a DACS-compliant finding aid for the Dr. Arthur E. Thomas Collection in ArchivesSpace; a collection-level MARC record was created for the Dr. Arthur E. Thomas Collection for WorldCat and Wright State’s local catalog; and an article about the project was published by the University’s Newsroom, the Dayton Daily News, and further distributed on our department’s social media.

Records Addressed in the Project
The grant project focused on 71 U-matic videocassette tapes in MS-667, Dr. Arthur E. Thomas, President Emeritus, Central State University, Collection, circa 1920-2020. The videotapes are a selection from Series II: “Like It Is” TV Program, 1977-1983 (https://wright.libraryhost.com/repositories/2/archival_objects/249884).

The physical U-matic tapes total 5.16 linear feet, and were fully processed as part of the grant project. The associated *.AVI and *.mp4 files of each tape were also processed. During the grant period, the
collection manager processed the collection as a whole, totaling 32.19 linear feet and 2.39 Terabytes.

Catalog Record and Finding Aid

- Finding aid in ArchivesSpace:
  MS-667, Dr. Arthur E. Thomas, President Emeritus, Central State University, Collection, Wright State University Libraries’ Special Collections and Archives, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio https://wright.libraryhost.com/repositories/2/resources/1090.

- Wright State University Libraries’ catalog record:
  https://catalog.libraries.wright.edu:443/record=b4795526~S10

- WorldCat record:
  https://worldcat.org/title/1353816955

Project Self-Assessment
The objective of the grant project was to digitize the obsolete U-matic videocassettes containing historically significant interviews with civil rights leaders from 1978-1983, to make them publicly available for research. Labels on the U-matic tapes taunted us with names such as Rev. Jesse Jackson; Maya Angelou; Rosa Parks; Nikki Giovanni; James H. McGee, Dayton’s first African American mayor; Louis Stokes, Ohio’s first elected African American Congressman; Larry Troutman, of the Dayton funk band Zapp, and so many others, leaving us feeling deprived of hearing how these trailblazers answered Dr. Thomas’ questions during a 30 minute public forum on a range of social and economic topics that are as relevant to understanding our world today, if not more so, as they were at the moment of the interview. The grant funds provided the needed funds to free the content from the obsolete media format, so we could provide description in the form of a finding aid, and catalog record, and make these interviews available to anyone who requests them. It is a valuable gift to today’s researchers and generations to come in studying socio-economic, educational, and cultural history across America in the context of race and gender.

Project Impact
Our staff has discussed plans to sustain and enhance the progress made in providing access to the “Like It Is” videos through this grant. We plan to transcribe the video interviews, and publish excerpts and eventually entire interviews in Wright State’s institutional repository, CORE Scholar (https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/).

Archives Staff are also discussing ways to promote the Dr. Arthur E. Thomas Collection and the “Like It Is” videos to campus faculty, students, and centers for outreach and instruction. The potential use of the videos is endless, and we are excited to develop avenues to increase access to the collection.
Building Upon the Success
The project provided a catalyst for additional digitization to be done on the collections’ audio and video formats. The content from the U-matic videos contains a treasure trove of viewpoints on civil rights and socio-economic issues from the 1970s-1980s with healthy debate and spirited discourse. Among the staff who have reviewed the digitized videos, there is strong agreement that the rest of the media needs to be digitized, described and made available to researchers. To that end, staff have begun digitizing media in the collection for which equipment is available inhouse, such as audiocassettes and VHS media. These digital files will be managed for long term preservation on the designated E-Archives server space purchased during the grant. Funding sources for a vendor to digitize the remaining U-matics in the collection are being investigated.

Local Press Coverage

- Harrah, Erica. “Wright State Received Grant to Digitize Local Program Featuring Prominent Civil Right Figures.” Wright State University Newsroom. May 26, 2022.

Blog Posts

- Rickey, Lisa. “Grant Received to Digitize Local Civil Rights Interview Program Videos.” Wright State University Libraries’ Special Collections and Archives Out of the Box blog. June 14, 2022.

• Twitter
  o May 27, 2022
    WrightState Archives @WrightStArchive · May 27
    We are so thrilled to announce that we have received a grant from the Ohio
    Historic Records Advisory Board to digitize Umatic tapes of the important
    1970s civil rights interview program “Like it Is” - learn more via
    @WrightStateNews : webapp2.wright.edu/web1/newsroom/

  o June 30, 2022
    WrightState Archives
    Wright State University Libraries @dunbarlibrary · Jun 30, 2022
    Check out today's Dayton Daily News to read more about the
    @WrightStArchive grant to digitize and make accessible “Like it Is,” the TV
    program that ran from 1978-1986. Current WSU students & employees - you
    can read this & more through Access World News! bit.ly/3bGwHll
December 13, 2022

WrightState Archives @WrightSTArchives - Dec 13, 2022
Great news! Local Civil Rights Program “Like It Is” Now Available to Researchers, Thanks to Grant
blogs.libraries.wright.edu/news/outoftheb...

Facebook:

May 27, 2022

Wright State University Libraries Special Collections & Archives
May 27
We are so thrilled to announce that we have received a grant from the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board - CHRIAB to digitize Umatic tapes of the important 1970s civil rights interview program “Like It Is” – learn more via Wright State News Room: https://webapp2.wright.edu/.../wright-state-receives...
### Project Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Grant Funds</th>
<th>Matching Funds</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 TB of server space from WSU ($850 per TB, sold in 1 TB increments)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$3,400.00</td>
<td>$3,400.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotals: Equipment</strong></td>
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<td>$3,509.99</td>
<td>$3,509.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contracted Services</td>
<td>Grant Funds</td>
<td>$681.50</td>
<td>$4,881.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scene Savers digitization of 71 U-matics (master and access files for each) -$10 less than budgeted from matching funds</td>
<td>$4,200.00</td>
<td>$681.50</td>
<td>$4,881.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotals: Contracted Services</strong></td>
<td>$4,200.00</td>
<td>$681.50</td>
<td>$4,881.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Eligible Expenses</td>
<td>Grant Funds</td>
<td>$54.60</td>
<td>$54.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>One (1) Round-trip from WSU to Scene Savers to bring back tapes-$47.16 less than budgeted (Scene Savers picked up tapes for no charge)</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
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<td>$54.60</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotals: Other Eligible Expenses</strong></td>
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<td>Summary Budget</td>
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</table>
Conclusion

We thank the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board for providing this grant opportunity through funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), National Archives and Records Administration. We are excited that a third of the “Like It Is” interview programs in the Dr. Arthur E. Thomas, President Emeritus, Central State University, Collection are digitized and available to the public. We are brimming with ideas to promote the interviews to the campus as an invaluable resource on African American history in the Miami Valley and across America. We will continue building upon the success of the grant by digitizing more of the media in the collection, and working toward enhancing access to the interviews by transcribing and placing them into CORE Scholar.